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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

United States Virgin Islands

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. General

1. The United States Virgin Islands is a Non-Self-Governing Territory administered by the United States of America. The Territory is located in the eastern part of the Caribbean Sea, 1,075 miles south-east of Miami and 60 miles east of Puerto Rico. The total land area is about 352 square kilometres. The Territory is made up of four main islands: St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas and Water Island. The capital, Charlotte Amalie, is located on St. Thomas. The Islands were in Danish possession from 1754 to 1917, when their purchase for $25 million by the United States of America became effective. United States citizenship was granted to Virgin Islanders under Acts of Congress on 25 February 1927 and 28 June 1932 through collective naturalization. The United States Office of Insular Affairs carries out the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior for the Territory.

2. The population of the Territory in 2006 was estimated at 113,689 (the 2010 census data for the United States Virgin Islands has not yet been made public). The racial stratification of the Territory's population is as follows: 70.61 per cent black, non-Hispanic; 5.57 per cent black, Hispanic; 11.30 per cent white, non-Hispanic; 1.70 per cent white, Hispanic; 6.63 per cent other Hispanic; 1.07 per cent Asian; and 3.03 per cent other. The languages spoken are: English or English Creole (74.70 per cent); Spanish or Spanish Creole (16.78 per cent); French or French Creole (6.57 per cent); and other (1.95 per cent). Religious preferences include: Baptist (42 per cent); Roman Catholic (34 per cent); Episcopalian (17 per cent); and other (7 per cent). About 95 per cent of the population live in urban settlements. The life expectancy at birth for the total population is 78.11 years. Literacy, defined as the proportion of the population aged 25 years and above that has completed fifth grade, is 97 per cent.

II. Constitutional, political and legal issues

3. The United States Virgin Islands is an organized, unincorporated Territory of the United States. Under the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands (1936), its revision in 1954, and subsequent amendments to the Revised Organic Act of 1954, the Territory has a Legislature, also known as the Senate, which is a unicameral body comprising 15 senators elected for a two-year term by popular vote. Executive power is vested in a Governor, who has been elected on the same ticket as the Lieutenant-Governor since 1970 by popular vote for a four-year term. The Governor is limited to two consecutive terms, but can be elected again after one full term out of office. The Governor appoints, with the advice and consent of the Legislature, the heads of the executive departments and has the power to approve or veto legislation and issue executive orders.

4. In the November 2010 gubernatorial election, John Percy de Jongh of the Democratic Party was re-elected Governor and Gregory Francis was re-elected Lieutenant Governor. The Territory's last legislative elections were held on 2 November 2010. The Territory elects a delegate to the United States House of Representatives, who is able to vote in committees. Democratic Candidate Donna

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations.

M. Christensen won the 2010 election by 71 per cent of the votes and was re-elected to an eighth two-year term as the United States Virgin Islands Delegate to the United States Congress. Craig W. Barshinger remains Senator at Large, having defeated his two opponents by a wide margin.

5. The Territory's judicial system has a District Court, a Superior Court and a Supreme Court, which became operational in January 2007. The Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands is the appellate court of the Virgin Islands that hears appeals decided by the Islands Superior Court. The establishment of the Supreme Court eliminates federal judicial involvement in purely local legal matters.

6. Since the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands was revised by the administering Power in 1954, there have been four attempts to replace it with a local constitution approved by the people of the Territory, which would organize the internal mechanisms of government. Although the United States Congress authorized the adoption of a local constitution in 1976 under United States Public Law 94-584, none of the four attempts made were successful.

7. As previously reported, on 26 May 2009 the Fifth Constitutional Convention adopted a proposed Constitution of the United States Virgin Islands by a two-thirds vote. The text of the proposed Constitution was submitted to the Governor on 31 May 2009. In a preamble and 19 articles, the 27-page text of the proposed Constitution includes provisions on a bill of rights; principles, branches and subdivisions of government; Virgin Islanders; elections; education; youth; taxation, finance and commerce; economic development; public health, safety and welfare; culture; protection of the environment; referendums and recalls; and creation of a Political Status Advisory Commission.

8. With regard to the creation of a Political Status Advisory Commission, the proposed Constitution states in article XVII that this should be done within two years of the adoption of the Constitution, with a term of office of three years. Moreover, after a year of public education on the status and federal relations options of (a) statehood, (b) free association and (c) independence, a special election would be held. The special election on status would be reserved for vote by "ancestral native" and "native" Virgin Islanders, as defined in article III of the proposed Constitution, whether residing within or outside the Territory.

9. Article III of the proposed Constitution states that an "ancestral native" Virgin Islander is a person or a descendant of such a person who was born or lived in the Territory on or before 28 June 1932 and was not a citizen of any other country; a "native" Virgin Islander is a person or descendant born in the Territory after 28 June 1932.

10. Certain provisions of the proposed Constitution have been a source of contention. For instance, under article VI, only "ancestral or native" Virgin Islanders are qualified to run for Governor and Lieutenant-Governor. Also, under article XI, "ancestral native" Virgin Islanders would not have to pay certain property taxes. Moreover, in a letter made public, the Governor articulated that the most general and generous reading of the draft Constitution showed it to be inconsistent with basic tenets of equal protection and fairness.

11. Speaking before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly on 22 June 2010, Gerard Luz Amwur James II, President of the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the United States Virgin Islands,

said that initially the Governor had refused to forward the proposed Constitution to the administering Power. However, in December 2009 he complied, following a ruling of the Territory's Superior Court.

12. On 26 February 2010, the President of the United States submitted the proposed Constitution to Congress, endorsing the conclusions reached by the Department of Justice that several features of the proposed text warranted analysis and comment, including the absence of an expressed recognition of United States sovereignty and the supremacy of federal law; provisions for a special election on the territorial status of the United States Virgin Islands; and provisions conferring legal advantages on certain groups defined by place and timing of birth, timing of residency or ancestry.

13. According to the statement made by the President of the Fifth Constitutional Convention on 22 June 2010 before the Fourth Committee, in March 2010 a delegation of the Convention, led by him, held consultations with United States congressional officials. The officials expressed a major objection to the provision in the proposed Constitution regarding the ownership by the people of the Territory of their marine resources. Another objection related to any meaningful reference to the native population and the provision of certain benefits. As a result, Congress asked the Convention to reconvene in order to consider the administering Power's objections to the proposed Constitution.

14. The President of the Convention stressed that the submitted proposed Constitution did not intend to alter the status of the Territory and would not serve as the basis for removing it from the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The proposed Constitution contains a relevant provision that would, upon adoption of the text, create a mechanism to examine future options with regard to political status.

III. Budget

15. In October 2010, the United States Virgin Islands Legislature passed a bill providing for a General Fund appropriation level of $831.3 million for the 2011 fiscal year. The budget includes $703,748,916 for the executive branch for all central Government departments and agencies. The executive budget includes $112,705,617 for a miscellaneous section under which smaller amounts are earmarked for local projects, programmes and community groups, as well as $19.8 million for the Senate and $39,311,741 for the United States Virgin Islands judicial branch. In his State of the Territory address, the Governor said that the 2011 fiscal year would be difficult. The financial situation had been worsened by the tax bill passed at the end of the last Congress. That legislation, as well as continuing the reduced income tax rates, also required the United States Virgin Islands to implement a small business tax credit with no offset, further straining the Territory's financial position.

16. According to the Governor, in 2011 General Fund revenues were projected to be down by 20 per cent from the 2008 pre-recession level. Personal income taxes were down 16 per cent and corporate income taxes had declined 71 per cent. Net income tax decreased 31 per cent while gross receipts taxes were down 5 per cent. For the General Fund, a revised shortfall for 2011 was projected at $75 million and for next year at $132 million. These deficits do not include the unfunded pension

fund contribution, which, if fully met, would increase these annual shortfalls by approximately $70 million each year.

17. To help cover the current operating budget gap and to avoid lay-offs, the Government will issue $250 million in bonds, to be backed by the excise tax on rum. The Government is also attempting to bridge the budget shortfall through reductions in the miscellaneous section of the budget, savings realized from a limited hiring freeze, attrition and the acceleration of capital projects.

18. The federal Government has continued to provide funding for the Territory's budget, inter alia, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, stimulus which has contributed funding (approximately $242 million) and the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds ($47.5 million). The Energy Office also secured more than $31 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. These funds will allow for the expansion of the solar water-heating industry in the Territory, the harnessing of landfill gases as a source of energy, an increase in energy efficiency consumer rebates and numerous other renewable energy projects.

IV. Economic conditions

A. General

19. Many of the Territory's economic indicators, although still negative, improved over the last two quarters of 2010. The Territory's unemployment rate declined from 8.5 per cent in the first quarter of the 2010 fiscal year to 8.0 per cent in the second quarter. Although initial unemployment claims were also in decline, the level of claims remained relatively high. The housing and real estate market appeared to be on a steadier footing, as construction permit values increased in recent months. Even so, nearly all of the economic sectors, including construction, trade, financial services and tourism, reported negative job growth. At the same time, the number of jobs in other areas of the service sector containing many small businesses grew 6.2 per cent in the second quarter. The professional and business sector also showed a modest job growth of about 2 per cent over the past two quarters. However, the Government's budget deficit may potentially derail the broader recovery.

20. Even construction, which had been the hardest-hit industry, started to see an increase in activity and jobs from Government public projects and the Diageo and Cruzan Rum distilleries.

B. Tourism

21. Tourism, which accounts for 70 per cent of the gross domestic product, remains the main sector of the United States Virgin Islands economy. Its importance can be seen both in terms of direct employment and its impact on entrepreneurship and small business development. Approximately 2 million tourists visit the Islands annually, arriving by cruise ship and air. Visitor arrivals increased a solid 18.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2010 compared with the 4.6 per cent recorded in the first quarter. Air arrivals increased 15.4 per cent, reaching 213,583 visitors and cruise passenger arrivals increased a robust 19.4 per cent, reaching 656,125 visitors,

bringing the total number of visitors to 869,708 from 734,551 in the second quarter of the 2009 fiscal year. A total of 1,491,579 visitors arrived in the Islands during the first six months of the 2010 fiscal year, 12.2 per cent more than the corresponding period in the 2009 fiscal year. Hotel occupancy rates have improved by 3.4 per cent in the past six months and hotel revenues have grown 12 per cent over the past year.

22. With a view to reinvigorating its critical tourism industry, the territorial Government has built up the cruise ship base of St. Thomas and brought cruise ships back to St. Croix on a regular basis. The air service and the capacity of airlines serving the Territory have been expanded as well. Plans are under way to invest in hotel developments and increase the participation of private investors.

23. The growth in visitor arrivals was supported by the Department of Tourism's multimedia advertising and promotional campaign launched to attract more holidaymakers from the United States, Europe and Puerto Rico.

C. Manufacturing, construction and financial services

24. The manufacturing sector, which is the second-largest sector in the economy and is composed primarily of businesses dealing in refined petroleum products, rum, dairy and jewellery, registered a decline in output and employment in 2010. Weakening global demand, high oil prices and lower profit margins on refined petroleum goods added to the decline in Hovensa's export products last year, while competition from other countries and weak demand caused the near collapse of the watch industry to the point where only one watch company remains. Employment in the manufacturing sector fell 4.5 per cent in the second quarter, averaging 2,166 jobs, a decrease of about 110 jobs over the second quarter of the 2009 fiscal year. The completion of Hovensa's turnaround project was the main reason for the job losses.

25. The Hovensa oil refinery, which employs more than 10,000 workers, produces a variety of refined products from crude oil imported from around the world, primarily from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The refinery is located on St. Croix and is one of the 10 largest in the world, with a crude oil distillation capacity of 495,000 barrels per day. Some of the products refined include gasoline, diesel, home heating oil, jet fuel, kerosene and residual fuel oil. Most of the industry's refined products (95 per cent) are exported to the United States. The value of Hovensa's refined products increased a significant 61.0 per cent to $2,920.3 billion in the second quarter of 2010 compared with the same period the previous year. For the first six months of 2010, $5,542.2 billion in refined products were exported.

26. The rum industry has shown remarkable improvement and continued to perform well. Rum exports increased 23.9 per cent, from 2,143 proof gallons in the second quarter of 2009 to 2,654 proof gallons in the second quarter of 2010. Rum exports in the first six months of the 2010 fiscal year totalled 4,830 proof gallons, a 20.7 per cent increase over the previous year. Rum produced in the United States Virgin Islands is exported in bulk primarily to the United States and is sold to local and regional bottlers for sale under a variety of private label and regional brand names.

27. The construction sector remained weak. Nonetheless, in 2010 the trend was positive. The total value of building permits, which measures future construction activity, increased 8.4 per cent, from $53 million in the first quarter of 2009 to $58 million in the same quarter of 2010. In the second quarter, permit values increased 12.6 per cent year-on-year to $47.5 million from $42.2 million. While the number of construction jobs remained below pre-recession levels, there has been gradual improvement aided by local and federal stimulus funding on road projects, the Diageo rum distillery and storage facility, and the Cruzan Rum distillery expansion and wastewater facility. The number of construction jobs averaged 2,159 in the second quarter compared with 2,269 for the corresponding period in the 2009 fiscal year.

28. Financial figures for the banking industry for 2009 and 2010 are not yet available. As regards jobs in the financial, insurance and real estate sector, their number for the second quarter fiscal year 2010 declined 6.3 per cent to an average 2,395 compared to 2,555 for the second quarter of 2009. Overall deposits of private individuals, partnerships and corporations fell $15 million to about $1,688.4 billion in 2008 from $1,703.1 billion in 2007.

D. Trade, transportation and utilities

29. The trade, transportation and utilities sector, dominated by retail trade activities, experienced in 2010 the effects of a fall-off in consumer spending, visitor travel and other transportation-related services. Retail trade jobs, which represent 90 per cent of jobs in the trade sector, declined 3.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2010 to 6,025 compared with 6,266 in the same quarter of the 2009 fiscal year. Wholesale trade jobs declined from 705 to 668 in 2010. Jobs in transportation, warehousing and utilities declined by 2.8 per cent to 1,602 from an average of 1,647 jobs in the second quarter of 2010.

30. The United States Virgin Islands has approximately 1,250 kilometres of roadways and some 65,000 registered vehicles. The Territory has one of the best natural deepwater harbours in the Caribbean and is strategically located along the Anegada Passage — a key route for ships bound for the Panama Canal. The Territory has five major docking facilities, which can accommodate cruise ships and some naval vessels. Three of the docks are on St. Croix, namely South Shore, Gallows Bay and Frederiksted. The other two are on St. Thomas, namely, the facilities operated in Crown Bay by the Virgin Islands Port Authority, a semi-autonomous Government agency, and the Islands-owned West Indian Company.

31. In the 2011 State of the Territory address, the Governor stressed that the United States Virgin Islands would redevelop its transportation systems with a view to addressing traffic flow problems. Particular attention would be paid to the water transportation provided by ferries servicing all of the United States Virgin Islands. As previously reported, the United States Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration had awarded the Port Authority of the Territory over $14 million for the ongoing rehabilitation of the runway of Cyril E. King Airport.

32. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous governmental entity of the territorial Government that produces and distributes electricity and potable water to approximately 54,000 electrical and 12,000 potable water

customers. The Authority installs and maintains street lights in the Territory. Electricity is thermally generated using imported fuels. In order to diversify its sources of energy, the Authority is conducting feasibility studies on the use of natural gas, solar energy and wind for the generation of electricity. It is also working with the Waste Management Authority on developing waste-to-energy facilities as part of its generation portfolio. In the 2011 State of the Territory address, it was pointed out that the Territory is implementing a plan to reduce by 60 per cent its dependence on fossil fuels over the next 15 years.

33. As previously reported, owing to limited freshwater supplies, salt water is used extensively for non-domestic purposes, including firefighting and sewage. A desalination plant on St. Thomas produces approximately 4.5 million gallons of water per day. Wells, particularly on St. Croix, supply the remainder of the freshwater necessary. Owing to the high cost of water, average daily consumption is about 50 gallons per person per day, about one third the United States average.

34. In terms of communications, the Territory has approximately 59,000 telephones, 8,700 Internet hosts (a computer connected directly to the Internet), and a number of radio and television broadcast stations. In cooperation with the United States Department of Commerce, the Territory is working on a broadband project, expected to be completed by June 2013, with over $115 million in federal, in kind and local cash contributions. The project, which entails laying out of 244 miles of new fibre cables connecting more than 700 pieces of network equipment, will create over 300 construction jobs and provide an opportunity for locals to be trained in fibre splicing and network maintenance. When completed, over 45 public computer centres will be established or renovated with advanced information technology.

E. Agriculture and fisheries

35. Historically, sugar cane and, to a lesser extent, cotton were the main sources of revenue for the Territory's economy. Currently, the agricultural sector is very small and comprises mainly fruit and vegetable cultivation and cattle-raising. According to the Governor's 2011 State of the Territory address, the United States Virgin Islands intends to achieve some level of food security by fostering relationships and practices that will expand opportunities for its farmers and protect the interests of its fishermen, even as the federal Government attempts to define and restrict their annual catch limits. The Governor believes that, while increased support and investment in both farming and fishing are not likely to result in near-term self-sufficiency, they will one day put the Territory in a much better position than the one it is in today.

36. In 2010, the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture continued its farmer-focused programmes and services and worked to complete and develop new projects. These included the completion of the Bordeaux Farmers Market, the complete installation of water wells (including pumps and distribution lines) in Estates Bordeaux and Dorothea on St. Thomas, the installation and expansion of new water distribution lines in the Community Gardens in St. Croix and the Territory-wide implementation of the Small Livestock Enterprise Development Program.

V. Social conditions

A. Labour

37. Generally, employment losses were less severe in the second quarter of the 2010 fiscal year than they were in the first quarter of that year. From January to March 2010, civilian employment fell 3.7 per cent compared with the same year in 2009, for a net loss of about 1,809 jobs. In the second quarter 46,907 persons were employed in civilian jobs: 20,170 on St. Croix and 26,737 on St. Thomas and St. John. As of the second quarter, the Territory's unemployment rate averaged 7.9 per cent, 1.4 per cent higher than a year ago. The rate for St. Croix increased to 8.5 per cent from 7.8 per cent in 2009, while the rate for St. Thomas and St. John increased year-on-year to 7.5 per cent from 5.6 per cent in 2009.

B. Education

38. Education in the United States Virgin Islands is compulsory and free for all children between five-and-one-half and 16 years of age. The Territory's Department of Education administers approximately 40 schools. The University of the Virgin Islands has campuses on St. Thomas and St. Croix, teaching some 2,500 full and part-time students in a variety of fields, such as education, business and public administration, as well as marine and environmental science, with over 300 graduates per year. A federal source estimates the Territory's literacy rate at about 95 per cent.

39. According to the Governor's 2011 State of the Territory address, the territorial Government ensured a continued increase in the "annual yearly progress" of its schools. In 2010, 19 schools made such progress compared with 13 schools in 2009. The goal was to raise the quality of all teachers. The Governor acknowledged that the artificial limitation on the school year was hurting children, adding that the limited school year must be lengthened.

C. Public health

40. The Virgin Islands Department of Health maintains facilities on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. The Department also maintains a long-term care facility for the mentally ill on the island of St. Thomas. Department outreach efforts include educational, preventive and treatment services via clinics and subdivisions for maternal and child health, family planning, environmental health, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and tuberculosis, mental health and substance abuse. The Department administers 33 activity centres and 16 federal programmes under the auspices of the Office of the Commissioner and the divisions dealing with fiscal affairs, support services, public health services and health promotion, and statistics.

41. The life expectancy of the Territory's total population is about 82 years for women and 76 for men. As previously reported, about 50 per cent of all United States Virgin Islands residents are without health insurance. In his 2011 State of the Territory address, the Governor noted that the federal health-care reform had provided positive opportunities for the Territory. With $300 million in additional federal funding over the reform period, the United States Virgin Islands would have

the historic opportunity to reduce its uninsured population from 28 per cent to a far lower number and to extend coverage to all pregnant women and children living under the poverty level. These reforms would enable the Territory to restructure its health-care delivery system so that the emergency room was not the primary point of access for the uninsured seeking primary care. Unlike in the United States, Medicaid (the federal- and state-funded health-care programme for low-income individuals and families) is not an entitlement programme in the Territory, which means that federal funding is "capped".

42. In accordance with the United States HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act signed in 2009, the Territory continued to receive important support for related programmes. In 2010, an outbreak of dengue fever was reported in the districts of St. Thomas and St. John, with 85 suspected or confirmed cases.

D. Crime and crime prevention

43. In his 2011 State of the Territory address, the Governor said that, with a view to curtailing the violent crime that continued to plague the community, the United States Virgin Islands would make sure that police officers were visible, accessible and responsive. The territorial Government would aim to educate parents and children about criminal activity and gang influences and prosecute to the fullest those who did wrong. A significant number of homicides and murders were committed in the Territory by those younger than 24 years old who were at one time or another under observation by the Territory's juvenile justice system or law enforcement. In that connection, the importance of ensuring that young people were trained for the jobs that drove the economy, such as technology, including broadband technology, and health care, was stressed.

44. As regards the area of law enforcement, the Governor underlined the need to continue to develop and strengthen the police force by recruiting new officers and broadening their professional training. The territorial Government made a number of changes of personnel in the Department of Justice in order to improve performance by its Assistant Attorneys General. The Territory's clearance rate in homicide cases was now over 65 per cent, above the national average, and it was continuing to improve.

VI. Environmental protection and disaster preparedness

45. In 2010, the territorial Government continued to implement an energy bill passed by the Legislature in 2009. The bill provides for raising awareness about the use of renewable energy alternatives in both the public and private sectors. In 2010, the United States Virgin Islands received nearly half a million dollars in federal funds to help preserve coral reefs near the island of St. Croix, which, like coral reefs across the Caribbean and elsewhere, face a growing threat of extinction from rising ocean temperatures. The $473,000 in funds were issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America.

46. In the area of emergency preparedness, the Territory has continued to enhance its operations with the opening of the new headquarters of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency. The consolidation of emergency call

centre operations at two districts has enhanced organizational efficiency by improving responsiveness to residents at their most critical time of need.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

47. The United States Virgin Islands is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Territory has observer status with the Alliance of Small Island States, which serves as a platform to promote action on environmental issues, including climate change. According to information provided by the administering Power, the United States Virgin Islands received acceptance as territorial Government with observer status at the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States in the last quarter of 2009.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

48. Developments regarding discussions on the future status of the United States Virgin Islands are reflected in section II above.

B. Position of the administering Power

49. In a letter dated 2 November 2006 addressed to the American Samoa Delegate to the United States Congress, the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs elaborated on the position of the United States Government on the status of American Samoa and other United States Insular Areas, which was considered equally valid for 2010. In his letter, as previously reported, the Assistant Secretary indicated that the status of the Insular Areas regarding their political relations with the federal Government was an internal United States issue, and not one that came under the purview of the Special Committee of 24. The letter also noted that the Special Committee of 24 had no authority to alter in any way the relationship between the United States and those Territories and no mandate to engage the United States in negotiations on their status. In the letter it was stated that, at the same time, in accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to provide regularly to the United Nations statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social and educational conditions, the federal Government did submit annual updates on United States Territories to the Special Committee of 24 as a demonstration of United States cooperation as an administering Power and as a corrective to any errors in information that the Special Committee of 24 might have received from other sources.

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

50. On 10 December 2010, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolutions 65/115 A and B, based on the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2010 (A/65/23), which was

transmitted to the Assembly and subsequently considered by the Fourth Committee. Section XI of resolution 65/115 B concerns the United States Virgin Islands. Under that section's operative paragraphs, the General Assembly:

1. *Welcomes* the proposal of a draft constitution emanating from the Territory in 2009, as a result of the work of the United States Virgin Islands fifth Constitutional Convention, for review by the administering Power, and requests the administering Power to assist the territorial Government in achieving its political, economic and social goals, in particular the successful conclusion of the ongoing internal Constitutional Convention exercise;

2. *Requests* the administering Power to facilitate the process for approval of the proposed territorial constitution in the United States Congress and its implementation once agreed upon in the Territory;

3. *Also requests* the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning a public education programme, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter of the United Nations, and, in this regard, calls upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

4. *Reiterates its call* for the inclusion of the Territory in regional programmes of the United Nations Development Programme, consistent with the participation of other Non-Self-Governing Territories.